com / Telephone Advisory Committees have been reconstituted for Gujarat State, Bhuj and Bulsar Telephone Districts.

Telephone Advisory Committee for the following Telecom. Districts in Gujarat are in the process of being reconstituted :

1. Bhavnagar
2. Jam Nagar
3. Junagarh
4. Mehsana
5. Nadiad
6. Surat
7. Vadodara
8. Ahmedabad
9. Rajkot

(c) and (d) Representation from various local bodies and Public-men including the recommendations of M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s are taken into account by the Minister of State for Communications before TZCs are constituted / reconstituted .

Distribution of Postal Stationery

849. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to allow the private sector to get into the distribution of postal stationery;

(b) whether Government have also granted official status to the Rs. 500 crore courier industry;

(c) what is the total revenue earned from the Speed Post Service during the financial year 1993-94;

(d) what are the expansion plans in respect of Speed Post Service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a A scheme of licensed postal agents already exists.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Total revenue earned during the year 1993-94 is Rs. 50,12,78,624/-.

(d) The expansion of Speed Post Service is an on being process and the service is provided on the potential viability and operational feasibility.

Satellite telecom system by NRI Group

850. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any NRI group has sought permission to set up a satellite communication network system in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) M/s. Matrix Paging (I) Pvt. Ltd. which is promoted by a group of NRIs has applied for a licence to operate 64 kbps VSAT service within the country using INSAT Satellite in the extended C-band. The Company has been issued a Letter of Intent. This is as per the Government policy to franchise 64 kbps VATS Service on INSAT on a non-exclusive basis to Indian registered Companies.

Shortage of post cards

851. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINNDE: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is • a fact that post cards are in short supply so much so

that village post offices show 'nil* stock for weeks and months together and poor villagers and tribals in rural and tribal areas are deprived of the facility;

(b) whether it is a fact that much loss is incurred by Government only as a social obligation in providing cheap communications facility to the weaker sections of the society including the poor rural and tribal people;

(c) whether this shortage for the weaker sections is attributable to the large scale diversion of post cards to the elite, especially those participating in 'quiz' and other competitions on Doordarshan and otherwise organised by different fora where replies to question are sought only on post cards; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to introduce special post cards for such elite purposes used for quiz competitions and the like, the price of which may be fixed as per cost incurred?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d) In supplying post cards to a network of more than 1,52,000 post offices, shortages in some pockets occasionally occur. The deficit of the Department of Post is largely because of the fact that the postal tariffs are below their costs. Provision of cheap communication facility to the Weaker Section of the society including poor, rural and tribal people, is one of the reasons for keeping postal tariffs below cost. While large number of post cards are used in quiz and other competitions on Doordarshan, it would not be entirely Correct to attribute shortage in some pockets of the country to this alone. In fact, it is the endeavour of the Govt, to increase the availability of post cards, if necessary by tapping printers in the private sector. However, since each post card costs the Department of Post Rs. 1.60 in printing, distribution and operation whereas the revenue from each post card is only IS ps., it is felt that use of such post cards for purposes of quiz competitions do not deserve the subsidy. Appropriate legislative measures will be taken to distinguish the use of post cards for such purposes.

MOU between VSNL and DOT

852. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and the Department of Telecommunications (DOT).

(b) if so, ihe salient features thereof; and I

(c) the step? taken to implement that MOU ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between DOT and VSNL for the year 1994-95.

(b) and (o) The salient features of the MOU and the steps taken to implement the same are detailed in the statement.

Statement

MOU (1994-95) *BETWEEN VSNL AND DOT*

A. *Salient features:*

(a) VSNL will pursue the following broad goals and objectives:

(I) To plan and provide full range of telecommunications services like Business Network, 64 Kbps service etc., from VSNL Gateways in India to all parts of the world to users at sea, on land and in air.